Gov. Perry: Texas Can Become the Nation’s Center for Regenerative Medicine

*Note - Gov. Perry frequently departs from prepared remarks.
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I'm very excited to be here, as you all come together in the name of some of the most promising developments in science and medicine in generations.

This conference represents another step in the growth of this industry, an industry I hope and expect will be centered right here in the Lone Star State.

Texas researchers certainly are doing their part in this mission.

Over the past three years alone, researchers across our state have published more than 100 peer-reviewed studies involving adult stem cells.

Go back to 2000, and that number grows to more than 500.

So no one should misunderstand, regenerative medicine is an industry Texas wants to be a major part of.

Adult stem cells and regenerative medicine hold the promise of miracles, miracles people across the world desperately need.

Today, a patient might be facing an uphill battle against a spinal cord injury, trying to recover from the ravages of heart disease, or losing their future, and their past, to the cruelty of Alzheimer's.

Regenerative medicine can help these people, and so very many more.

There's almost no field of medicine that can't be advanced by the research you're conducting, and the treatments you will develop.

And Texas is the perfect place to make that happen.

Texas has always been a natural fit for innovative and creative people trying to accomplish what hasn't been done.

From the development of the integrated circuit at Texas Instruments in the 1950s, through the heart of the space race at NASA's Johnson Space Center, to the life-saving treatments and technologies being developed at the UT Health Science Center, Texas has been home to cutting-edge ideas.

Texas has always been a place where the technology of the day and some good old-fashioned common sense can come together and create something new.
Texas is also home to an irrepressible pioneer spirit, our birthright as descendants of individuals who came to a beautiful, if untamed land, and set about creating the home they'd always dreamed of.

As a result, Texans aren't a breed to be easily intimidated, and they certainly won't give up in the face of a setback or two.

As state leaders, we have to make sure those setbacks aren't a result of state meddling or a crippling bureaucratic structure.

Over the past decade, we've taken many steps to make our state more receptive and conducive to this kind of research.

We're made sure that innovators won't be hindered by exorbitant taxes, wrapped up by bureaucratic red tape, or find themselves at the mercy of predatory attorneys, seeking to make steady money off extensive, drawn-out court cases.

We've helped create a place with a world-class workforce that's capable of fulfilling whatever needs an employer has, whether that's producing a life-saving vaccine, selling a product line, or securing equipment necessary to complete the task at hand.

In short, they see we've created a fertile climate where innovators are free to create and nurture their ideas, and where government stays out of the way.

That's good for any type of company, and it's particularly good for innovative young companies seeking firm footing during their early years.

However, that's not all Texas has had to offer over the last decade.

We have invested in programs that have helped spur a massive amount of research in our state.

Among the first I should mention is the Texas Emerging Technology Fund.

This fund is a tool we created seven years ago, serving two main purposes.

One, it helps attract top-flight researchers from across the country and around the world through grants and grant-matching funds, and two, it enables us to invest in promising young companies that might otherwise flee to the coasts in search of easier access to funds from venture or angel capitalists.

It's succeeded on a massive scale in both of its functions.

Through the ETF, the state has invested more than $180 million in grant-matching and research superiority funds in Texas universities, putting some of the top researchers in the world to work on projects that will improve communities, cure diseases, and save lives.

As just one example, the ETF enabled us to land Dr. Darwin Prockup and his team from Tulane University Health Science Center.

He's now heading the Institute for Regenerative Medicine at Texas A&M,
focused on research on adult stem cells from bone marrow.

He's joining a vibrant, and growing, community of Texas-based researchers who are blazing trails and recording breakthrough after breakthrough.

One of our more recent arrivals is Dr. Doris Taylor, and who I believe is speaking here at this conference.

We managed to convince Dr. Taylor to leave the snowy plains of Minnesota for our somewhat warmer climate, joining Dr. Willerson at the Texas Heart Institute.

Of course, a world-class researcher like Dr. Taylor doesn't move to Texas for the weather, she's here because she sees the potential of what she, and others here, can accomplish.

Beyond attracting researchers, directly and indirectly, the Emerging Technology Fund has invested in 137 early-stage companies, more than $194 million, helping ensure that innovations created in Texas remain here throughout their production cycle, from the laboratory all the way to the marketplace.

More than $103 million has been invested directly in companies commercializing technologies in biotechnology and life sciences.

That's about more than just jobs, it's about ensuring that our best and brightest stay in Texas.

It's about building up our high-tech sectors, and laying a foundation we can build upon for years, and even decades, to come.

The proof is in the pudding, as a result of the ETF awards, these companies have been able to attract more than $592 million in outside investment, more than three times what the state originally invested.

This summer, I was invited to travel to Boston, where Texas was ranked at the top in biotech job creation in the respected Battelle Study.

I was proud of Texas' achievement that day, and excited about our prospects for more.

Two years after the Emerging Tech Fund got its start, I called on Texas to take another step into the biotech world with the creation of a different program, this one specifically targeting cancer.

So, in 2007, Texas lawmakers passed, and Texas voters approved, the creation of the Cancer Prevention and Research Institute of Texas, or CPRIT, a $3 billion effort with a laser focus on curing cancer.

CPRIT has funded 427 awards, totaling more than $756 million for cancer research, commercialization and prevention, in academic institutions, non-profit organizations and private companies.
Including matching funds, that's more than $900 million pumped into the fight against cancer in Texas.

 Lastly, although it isn't specifically targeted to medical, biotech or other high-tech companies, I should also mention our Texas Enterprise Fund, which is one of the most effective "deal closing" funds in the country.

 Through those deals, we've been able to attract some of the most recognizable companies in the country to Texas, for expansion or relocation...and invested more than $98 million dollars in biotech-related projects, by names like Medtronic, Becton Dickinson, Scott & White and Hanger Orthopedic.

 If you need yet one more piece of evidence that Texas is on its way, this summer, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services selected Texas A&M as one of only three sites in the nation for a Center for Innovation in Advanced Development and Manufacturing.

 This national center will play a key role in securing our country from bio-terrorism and global pandemic, through the rapid development and manufacturing of vaccines and therapies to protect human life.

 It further solidifies our status as a vital part of the ongoing development of life-saving vaccines and treatments, and will bring in billions more in outside research dollars, for decades to come.

 Like so many of our accomplishments in this field, it was only possible because of the extensive investments we've made in boosting our high-tech and biotech sectors over the past decade.

 We sounded the call for those willing to engineer new solutions to the most complex problems facing science and medicine, a call many of you with us today have answered.

 Taken together, all of these efforts have created an environment rich with potential for researchers, and anyone with a vision and the determination to make it a reality.

 We're far from finished, however.

 Again, Texas holds the potential of becoming the nation's center for regenerative medicine, an environment where the concentration of sheer brainpower in this field reaches a critical mass, and makes our state the first that comes to mind when people think of cutting edge medical research.

 There's much more that we can do.

 Earlier this year, the Texas Legislature, the Texas Medical Board and the Health and Human Services Commission came together and worked to set a course for companies, institutions, and physicians to work together in the interest of safe, effective and ethical adult stem cell research.
As state leaders, this is among our most vital tasks.

We must do everything we can to ensure that the cures for Parkinson's, diabetes, and of course, cancer, are not only found much more quickly, but they're found in Texas.

Thank you once again for having me here today, and good luck and Godspeed on your life-changing missions of mercy.

May God bless you and, through you, may He continue to bless the great state of Texas.

http://governor.state.tx.us/news/speech/17803/